

Speaking of Music

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S P E A K I N G O F M U S I C

With human perception as its central theme, the Exploratorium has always used the insights of both scientists and artists to establish notions of how one sees, knows, and understands the world. The Exploratorium's Speaking of Music series is one of many programs here that seeks to discover why things are the way they are: how the artist, like the scientist, probes, investigates, interprets nature, and makes decisions.

As with everything else at the Exploratorium, participation is the key, so we encourage you to ask questions of our guests. Now in its seventeenth year, Speaking of Music has presented such composers as Keith Jarrett, Laurie Anderson, Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, John Cage, Milton Babbitt, Anthony Braxton, Pauline Oliveros, and Frank Zappa.

The Speaking of Music series has been hosted and programmed by composer Charles Amirkhanian since 1983. Amirkhanian is Music Director of the Pacifica Foundation's listener-sponsored station, KPFA-FM in Berkeley. He is also co-director of the Telluride Institute's Composer-to-Composer forum and festival, held annually in southwestern Colorado. Amirkhanian is the 1984 recipient of the American Music Center's Letter of Distinction for his service to American composers and their music.

This fall, Speaking of Music joins the Brooklyn Academy of Music as it celebrates the tenth anniversary of its annual "New Music America" festival. Presentations on November 13, 14, 15, and 16, held at La Mama Theater in Manhattan and hosted by Charles Amirkhanian, feature Conlon Nancarrow, Trimpin, Geri Allen, Steve Coleman, Frederic Rzewski, Richard Teitelbaum, Alvin Curran, and others. For more information, write to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette St., Brooklyn, NY 11215.

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ALVIN CURRAN
September 28, 1989

WATERWORKS
McBean Theatre, 8 PM

Born December 13, 1938, in Providence, Rhode Island, Alvin Curran makes music for all occasions. His works encompass community sings for all the choruses in Wales, concerts for bass drums only, string quartets with computers, radio events for all the fog horns on the Atlantic Coast, or simple piano pieces for children. His work emerges from a volatile mixture of influences--from Elliott Carter's compositions at Yale, Music Elettronica Viva's radical improvisations with Teitelbaum, Rzewski, Braxton and Amacher, and years of recording ambient sounds worldwide. He has been further influenced by the works of Giacinto Scelsi, Thelonius Monk, Charles Ives, John Cage and Spike Jones. After living in Italy for two over decades, Mr. Curran recently has returned here and lives currently in Manhattan.

This week, Curran's latest composition, Electric Rags II, will be introduced by the ROVA Saxophone Quartet and the composer. The saxophones will serve as instrument-controllers MIDI'd to other synthesizers to create remarkable confluences of sound which are not otherwise possible to perform. A recorded sample of this work will be heard tonight taken from the premiere performance on Friday September 15th, 1989, at the Atlanta Festival of the Arts. The music consists of 30 3-minute pieces which can be played in any modular arrangement. ROVA performances can be heard tomorrow and Saturday evenings, at Life on the Water, 8:30pm, Fort Mason, Building B. Reservations may be made at 776-8999.

A previous piece, Electric Rags I, featured the composer at a midi-grand piano controlling other synthesizers at the 1985 Musik der Zeit festival (WDR).

In addition tonight, Mr. Curran will present a recorded performance of his Waterworks for computerized ship horns as heard at the 1987 Ars Electronica festival in Linz, Austria.

Also, we'll hear segments from his interstellar oratorio, Crystal Psalms, a memorial for the victims of the Krystalnacht (October 9-10, 1938) in which most of the houses and synagogues of the Jews in Germany and Austria were destroyed in the hysteria of Nazi terror. This large-scale work was scored for radio stations in six European countries simultaneously and was presented October 20, 1988.